



United States Department
of Agriculture

National Agricultural
Statistics Service

Washington Agricultural Statistics Service
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Washington Crop Weather

Released: March 28, 2005
Week Ending: March 27, 2005
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Heavy Rain Brought Relief Fruit Crops Blooming

Field Crops

A nice soaking rain over the weekend came as good news to all sectors of agriculture. Winter wheat was in fair to good condition. Spring cereal crop seeding started and will be progressing during the next few weeks. The planting of potatoes also began. Christmas tree growers finished fertilizer application work. Producers still concern about the affect of the dry conditions on grazing land and non-irrigated crops. More rain will be needed to keep the crops sustained during warm and dry winds.

Livestock

Range and pasture conditions were 18% very poor, 29% poor, 36% fair, and 17% good. Pacific County oyster growers completed burrowing shrimp assessments in preparation for summer treatment. They also continued harvest and transplanting operations. Garfield County reported problems with crooked calf syndrome due to lupine consumption.

Fruits and Vegetables

Stone fruits, pear trees, and tulip fields were in bloom. Raspberries and blueberries were budding. Cranberry producers applied early season herbicides and continued bog maintenance work. Retail nursery and garden stores continued to increase inventories of annual bedding plants and vegetable transplants. Nurserymen were pleased that rainfall helped to alleviate drought concerns for home gardeners.

Days Suitable for Fieldwork

Week	Days
This Week	4.0
Last Week	NA

Moisture and Supply

Item	Percent			
	VS	SH	AD	S
Topsoil	6	25	64	5
Topsoil 5 Yr Avg	NA	NA	NA	NA
Subsoil	26	46	27	1
Subsoil 5 Yr Avg	NA	NA	NA	NA
Irrigation Water	13	13	73	1
Irrigation Water 5 Yr Avg	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hay & Roughage	4	14	81	1

VS=Very Short SH=Short AD=Adequate S=Surplus

Crop Progress

Crop/Activity	Percent Completed			
	This Week	Last Week	2004	5 Yr. Avg.
Spring Wheat Planted	46	NA	NA	NA
Spring Wheat Emerged	13	NA	NA	NA
Barley Planted	31	NA	NA	NA
Barley Emerged	8	NA	NA	NA
Potatoes Planted	6	NA	NA	NA
Proc. Green Peas Planted	8	NA	NA	NA
Dry Peas Planted	14	NA	NA	NA

Crop Condition*

Crop	% Acreage				
	VP	P	F	G	EX
Winter Wheat Dryland	2	3	31	57	7
Winter Wheat Irrigated	0	0	22	76	2

VP=Very Poor P=Poor F=Fair G=Good EX=Excellent

- Crop conditions are a measurement of the growing conditions and are not indicative of the quality of the crop produced.

COUNTY COMMENTS

Western

Clark/Skagit/Cowlitz/Wahkiakum: Heavy rains occurred throughout the area over the weekend. Most certainly, this eased the drought concerns for pastures and hay crops. Many of the fruit and berry crops were prematurely blooming prior to heavy rains.

Grays Harbor/Lewis/Pacific: The warm and drier than normal conditions in early March resulted in earlier than normal forage growth. Initially, production was 2-3 weeks ahead of schedule. Heavy rains the final two weeks of March slowed everything, including spring tillage. The end result, was that most operations were about on schedule. A drier than normal winter raised farmer's concerns. However, the recent change in the weather pattern is hopefully an indication that the drought is ending just in time for spring planting.

Grays Harbor (2nd Report): A large part of the rural landscape resembles the state of Minnesota with hundreds of surface water lakes. Heavy rainfall over the weekend (3.0 plus inches) resulted in flooding along all major rivers and small streams. Many agricultural fields were transformed into scenic lakes. The lakes were reflecting surfaces for a tapestry of color that radiated from the hillsides and valley floors as native trees and shrubs displayed their new foliage. Although the wet soils will more than likely delay soil cultivation in preparation for spring planting, ag producers were jubilant that the drought has ended. Retail nurseries and garden stores were pleased that the rainfall will increase annual bedding plant sales as home gardeners dismissed concern over drought conditions.

Lewis: The spring rains returned over the last few days, creating a mixed response by producers. Water was standing in some areas and draining off slowly.

Mason: Heavy rain late in the week brought some relief to concerns about immediate drought conditions. The sight of snow on the peaks of the Olympic Mountains also put minds at ease. Temperatures remained relatively warm, with highs in the upper 50's and lower 60's and the lows dipping below 30 degrees only once. The Skokomish Valley experienced some flooding later in the week, and soil moisture was adequate county wide. Agricultural producers found themselves ahead of schedule in preparation for the growing season.

Mason (2nd Report): A 2 inch deluge of rain on Saturday, March 26, followed a week of intermittent showers which restored the ponds and streams to a normal level. Some fieldwork was accomplished early in the week, but spraying and fertilizing came to a halt when the rains came. Apple trees were poised for bud break, but cold evening temperatures and the lack of afternoon sun kept them at the same stage for days. Tent caterpillars will be prevalent in the area this year, as webs have been picked daily from the trees. Calving progressed and cattle will be put on spring pastures the first week of April. Cattle will be rotated early and often on the pastures. Excess hay has been stored due to the mild winter, but it is expected to be needed in late summer if the drought materializes.

Pacific: Wet, cold conditions continued to limit field operations for growers. Cranberry producers applied early season herbicides, and continued bog maintenance work. Pastures received much needed rainfall for improved spring conditions. Christmas tree growers finished fertilizer application work. Oyster growers completed burrowing shrimp assessments in preparation for summer treatment and continued harvesting and transplanting operations.

Pierce: The daytime temperature has been averaging 50 degrees and the night time temperatures have been 35-40 degrees. It looks like it will be a good growing year.

Pierce (2nd Report): Rain was well below normal until midweek. The precipitation remained below average. Livestock were fed daily to maintain their weight. Unless the precipitation increases, the hay crops will be well below average. Numerous wells, normally used for hay irrigation, have dried up to the point of being unusable for irrigation. Part of this was due to the lack of rain/snow, but most of the problem was due to urban sprawl into the agricultural areas with new wells being drilled to support housing.

Pierce/South King: Rain was received on March 19 and 20. Producers were back on schedule for planting spring crops. Some producers may have taken advantage of the warm weather to begin planting a little earlier than normal. Pastures were looking good. There were no unusual situations to report.

Thurston: The long, unseasonable dry spell came to a screeching halt this past week, as record breaking rainfall soaked the rural landscape. Nearly 3 inches of rain fell over the weekend, resulting in minor flooding along the Chehalis river and other major rivers. Ag producers were happy that they had not yet begun field cultivation in fields adjacent to rivers, which would be subject to soil erosion. The flood would have been significant had the rivers not been at extremely low levels, which allowed them to accommodate the heavy rainfall.

Thurston (2nd Report): Elderberry blossomed early. Green up seems advanced as well. There was lots of hay left over due to the mild winter. Cattle were able to graze more than usual. The hens began laying again. Heavy rains received during the past week were welcomed. Grass growth was great. The garlic grew all winter and were far ahead of normal. Daffodils bloomed early and seem to be about to pass early as well.

Skagit/Island/San Juan: Growers began planting spring seeded crops. Precipitation during the week was intermittent. There were no crop losses reported. Growers were concerned about availability of water later this year.

Skagit (2nd Report): Farming operations were at full tilt in most sectors of the county. Most plant development was 10-15 days ahead of normal. Tulip fields were in bloom. Late in the week snow fell in the mountain regions, which was welcomed in view of the light snow pack this past winter. Spinach and potatoes were being planted, and many fields were being prepared for planting of other crops.

Snohomish/ King: Heavy rains late in the week slowed fieldwork, which was ahead of schedule. Pastures were growing well. Stone fruits and pears were in the bloom stage.

Snohomish/ King (2nd Report): January was mostly mild with only a week of consistently freezing temperatures. One good snowfall was received. Some localized flooding occurred when it melted. No fieldwork was being done. Pastures and fields were mostly soggy.

Whatcom: After several days of warm, dry weather, and rain last week halted any field activities. Red raspberries and blueberries were budding. Between showers fieldwork began in vegetable fields, including potatoes.

Central

Benton: Within the past six months, Benton County has been in a drought situation, which includes some areas that were irrigated by the Yakima river. The Roza, Benton, and Kennewick Irrigation Districts are projecting that they will receive 30 percent of normal irrigation on about 60,000 acres. The Bureau of Reclamation reported that if it remains as dry as the last six months, this figure could drop as low as 15 percent of the normal water supply for producers with junior water rights. According to these irrigation districts, the percentage of permanent crops range from 65-75 percent, which include cherries, apples, grapes, and stone fruit. Many producers have informed the Benton County office that if they are able to water, they will have to buy new pumps to adjust to the abnormal amount of water supply. In 2001, producers were rationed to 4.7 gallons per minute (gpm), which would be 60 percent of what they normally receive. As a result, farmers were forced to lose crops that take 3-4 years to produce. According to the Roza administrators, the water supply will be on for one more week at 2.2 gpm, or 84 gallons per 40 acres. They will shut down water supplies until the end of April, and turn them on again in May for two more weeks, at about 2.0 gpm. The supply will then be turned off until June and return in mid-June and continue, if sustainable, through August at 1.5 to 1.8 gpm. These low amounts of water will have a severe impact on the small farms in these irrigation districts. To put things in perspective, in a normal year Roza irrigation turns their supply on at 7.9 gpm for every 40 acres. WSU PAWS precipitation monitoring stations showed a cumulative average of 35.66 percent of normal precipitation from October 2004 through March 2005. October through March are normally the months which provide the greatest amount of precipitation for rangeland, wheat, and CRP in the county. On average, normal precipitation in these months account for 68 percent of the total precipitation. Annual and bunch grasses on rangeland are significantly stressed at this point. Under continued drought conditions, ranchers in dryland and irrigated areas will be forced to use supplemental feed at much higher levels and/or sell livestock in greater numbers. Emergency CRP grazing will be requested with a possible reduction in the 25 percent rental payment. Temperatures in March have been above normal within the last few days at record highs. This hotter than normal temperature has caused perennial crops to begin growth earlier than normal by 15 to 20 days, which will cost many producers a longer frost season and doubts of not knowing if a crop will be harvested. Benton County received 0.37 inches of precipitation over the weekend, which was the first measurable precipitation this month. Along with the rain came a wind condition of 50-60 mph.

Benton (2nd Report): There was some improvement to topsoil moisture, but subsoil moisture was in very short supply.

Benton (3rd Report): Some frost protection was necessary in tree fruit. Concern continued for the lack of snow pack. Late pruning plus orchard and vineyard cleanup were some of the other activities. Bed preparation for vegetables was also underway.

Chelan/Douglas: Several producers indicated they will not plant spring wheat if dry conditions continue. Recent precipitation will help the winter wheat crop and spring grazing conditions. Several growers (who irrigate out of mountain lakes) were told their irrigation districts will be cutting back due to the water shortage. Apricots were in bloom. Cold temperatures were causing fruit producers to use wind machines for frost control. Some livestock producers reported they were already hauling water because springs and lakes are dry. Emergency Conservation Program funding was being requested for irrigation and livestock water.

Chelan (2nd Report): Rain was received last week. The bloom on apples will be eight days earlier than normal.

Grant: Rains received over the weekend lessened the effects of the drought. Dryland wheat looked good, but more rain is needed. Range conditions improved, but the amount of usable forage in pastures was still in question. Fresh pea and potato planting began in the southern portions of the county.

Klickitat: Recent rains helped the winter wheat crop. The rain came too late to help spring pastures and may be too late to help dryland hay crops.

Klickitat (2nd Report): Cold, wet weather interrupted early green up of pastures, winter crops, and lawns. Over 1.5 inches of rain was received in the past two days, but cumulative winter precipitation is still at least 8 inches below normal. Temperatures were as low as the higher 30's, but fruit tree buds should survive okay as long as temperatures don't drop any lower.

Okanogan/Ferry: Some producers indicated that if they don't receive more rain they won't be able to plant spring grain crops. The county received reports of 0.34 inches of precipitation. This will help winter wheat and spring pastures. There were no reports of freeze damage to the orchards. So far, there has been no reduction in irrigation water allocation.

Yakima: Average temperatures varied from 5 degrees below normal to 6 degrees above normal, with 0.28 inches of precipitation. Producers were still concerned about the affect of the dry conditions on grazing land and non-irrigated crops.

Eastern

Adams: Precipitation of over an inch during the weekend was greatly needed. Topsoil moisture was adequate for now, but subsoil moisture remained in short and very short supply. Winter wheat was in mostly good to excellent conditions, especially after precipitation. Spring cereal seeding was nearly complete.

Adams (2nd Report): A nice soaking rain was received over the weekend, which was good news to all sectors of agriculture. Winter wheat looked mostly very good at this point. Whether the rain will revive growers thoughts of considering spring crop options remains to be seen. The rain was very helpful to the already seeded crops.

Asotin/Garfield: Rain late in the week and over the weekend provided relief from the drought. More rain will be needed throughout the growing season to produce normal crops and provide normal growth in rangelands. The total moisture for the crop year is still well below normal. Winter wheat was in mostly good condition and spring planting progressed rapidly prior to the weekend rains. Rangeland was in poor to fair condition due to drought conditions, but rain will improve conditions for the short term. Water supplies in streams and spring was still a problem.

Ferry: Last week rain and snow was received, but not enough to alleviate the very dry subsoil. Range and hay land were still dormant. Alfalfa grass hay land was just breaking dormancy.

Garfield (2nd Report): Dust was blowing through mid-week in some areas. Rain was received late in the week and had producers feeling more optimistic about crop conditions. Cheatgrass was green in rangeland areas. Toxic weeds may be a concern for livestock producers this year. Some problems with crooked calves were reported due to lupine consumption. Wheat was in the ground. There was some winter damage to winter wheat. Crops were spotting and uneven with some yellowing. Barley will probably be planted in April or May.

Lincoln: The winter wheat crop looked good with a much needed rain received on March 26. More rain will be needed to keep the winter wheat crop sustained during warm dry

winds. The drought conditions made most producers in the dryland area forgo recropping because of low moisture profiles in the top four feet. Farmers were recropping only to keep some of their fields in proper rotation.

Lincoln (2nd Report): Precipitation over the weekend was needed. Topsoil moisture was adequate for now, but subsoil moisture remained in short and very short supply. Winter wheat was in mostly good to excellent condition and spring cereal crop seeding began and will progress over the next few weeks.

Spokane/Pend Oreille: Reports were received of over 2 inches in Pend Oreille County and an average of 1.5 inches in Spokane County. Some erosion occurred due to the accumulation coming so quickly. Additional rainfall is needed to grow a normal crop. Producers were concerned about small grains that were seeded have not yet emerged. Winter wheat looked good for the most part. The rain should help the pasture situation as the temperatures warm up and grass begins to grow.

Stevens: Early in the week a few farmers were spreading fertilizer, harrowing, and placing gopher bait in fields. The weekend brought steady precipitation that lasted approximately 36 hours. It's too early to determine the impact the lack of moisture will have on crops and pastures.

Walla Walla: Although the area experienced good rainfall over the past week, great concern remained over drought conditions. Irrigators were expecting some drainage to have no water and others were heavily monitored with the exception of being cut off much earlier than in previous years. Rainfall over the past three days resulted in accumulations of 1.5 inches. Winter wheat crops appeared in good condition.

Whitman: Winter wheat and pasture conditions will be helped tremendously by the weekend rains. Totals of up to 1.5 inches were reported in the county. Fieldwork progressed, but many operations were holding off on seeding pulse crops because of cool soil moisture. Preparing seedbeds, fertilizing, and seeding spring grains progressed as much as a month ahead of schedule.

Weekly Weather Statistics

March 28, 2005

Station	Air Temperature				Growing Degree Days				Last Week Precipitation			Season Precipitation			
	LO	HI	AV G	DFN	Base 50F		Base 60F		Total			Total		% Normal	Days
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN	Inches	DFN	Days	Inches	DFN		
WEST															
Bellingham	34	56	45	1	0	-5	0	0	1.21	0.58	3	29.63	3.18	112	103
Everett	35	55	46	0	0	-7	0	0	1.09	0.30	3	17.78	-8.49	68	103
Hoquiam	36	59	46	-1	0	-7	0	0	3.02	1.52	5	40.63	-13.80	75	115
Kelso	36	57	47	2	0	-7	0	0	2.40	1.43	3	16.57	-18.66	47	75
Olympia	26	57	45	1	0	-5	0	0	3.32	2.29	5	27.33	-13.78	66	101
Sea-Tac	37	56	46	0	0	-7	0	0	2.27	1.53	3	21.34	-8.15	72	87
Shelton	28	58	44	-3	0	-7	0	0	3.74	2.35	4	40.20	-13.83	74	98
Tacoma	28	55	45	-2	0	-7	0	0	2.16	1.33	4	18.08	-12.52	59	78
Vancouver	36	55	47	2	3	-4	0	0	2.63	1.79	5	18.36	-13.86	57	93
CENTRAL															
Ellensburg	26	57	44	3	0	0	0	0	0.14	0.00	3	3.63	-2.95	55	51
Stampede Pass	26	45	35	5	0	0	0	0	3.39	1.82	3	45.89	-19.84	70	105
Wenatchee	31	55	44	-2	0	-4	0	0	0.10	-0.04	1	3.94	-1.92	67	46
Yakima AP	25	58	44	-2	1	-2	0	0	0.27	0.13	2	3.76	-2.11	64	49
NORTHEAST															
Colville	25	56	42	2	0	-2	0	0	0.92	0.50	3	12.42	-1.58	89	60
Deer Park	22	51	37	-4	0	-2	0	0	1.75	1.40	3	11.65	-0.72	94	70
Spokane AP	26	50	38	-3	0	-3	0	0	1.05	0.72	4	6.81	-4.32	61	56
EAST CENTRAL															
Ephrata	28	55	43	-3	0	-4	0	0	0.30	0.16	3	3.09	-2.06	60	36
Moses Lake	27	58	44	-2	1	-3	0	0	0.29	0.15	3	2.96	-2.19	57	33
Quincy	31	56	44	-2	0	-3	0	0	0.19	0.05	3	2.97	-2.54	54	31
Ritzville	27	61	39	-3	0	0	0	0	0.97	0.76	1	5.06	-2.92	63	36
SOUTHEAST															
Hanford	29	58	45	-4	1	-10	0	0	0.33	0.19	2	2.59	-2.08	55	31
Pasco	28	65	47	-2	7	-3	0	0	0.30	0.16	5	3.02	-2.43	55	40
Pullman	30	50	39	-2	0	0	0	0	0.22	-0.24	2	3.34	-11.38	23	41
Whitman Miss.	26	69	43	-4	5	-2	0	0	0.41	0.13	6	5.86	-3.46	63	62
ID PANHANDLE															
Coeur D'A' AP	25	57	39	-3	0	-2	0	0	0.58	0.09	2	8.49	-9.32	48	48
Lewiston ID	33	65	44	-2	3	-4	0	0	0.34	0.06	4	4.65	-2.49	65	53

Summary based on NWS data.

Season Cumulative Precip Starts: Wednesday September 1, 2004

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).

NA = Data Unavailable

Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.

Precipitation Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.

Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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